



Living What We Believe

*Our religion must find expression
in our everyday lives.*

From the Life of George Albert Smith

When he was 34 years old, George Albert Smith made a list of resolutions that he called his “personal creed”—11 ideals that he committed to live by:

“I would be a friend to the friendless and find joy in ministering to the needs of the poor.

“I would visit the sick and afflicted and inspire in them a desire for faith to be healed.

“I would teach the truth to the understanding and blessing of all mankind.

“I would seek out the erring one and try to win him back to a righteous and a happy life.

“I would not seek to force people to live up to my ideals but rather love them into doing the thing that is right.

“I would live with the masses and help to solve their problems that their earth life may be happy.

“I would avoid the publicity of high positions and discourage the flattery of thoughtless friends.

“I would not knowingly wound the feelings of any, not even one who may have wronged me, but would seek to do him good and make him my friend.

“I would overcome the tendency to selfishness and jealousy and rejoice in the successes of all the children of my Heavenly Father.

“I would not be an enemy to any living soul.

“Knowing that the Redeemer of mankind has offered to the world the only plan that will fully develop us and make us really happy here and hereafter, I feel it not only a duty but also a blessed privilege to disseminate this truth.”¹ [See suggestion 1 on page 9.]

Those who knew President Smith declared that he truly did live by his creed. Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, shared an experience in which President Smith was true to his resolution to “visit the sick and afflicted and inspire in them a desire for faith to be healed”:

“I shall never cease to be grateful for the visits he made to my home while I was [away] serving as a humble missionary. . . . Particularly I am thankful for a visit in the still of the night when our little one lay at death’s door. Without any announcement, President Smith found time to come into that home and place his hands upon the head of that little one, held in her mother’s arms as she had been for many hours, and promise her complete recovery. This was President Smith, he always had time to help, particularly those who were sick, those who needed him most.”²

Spencer W. Kimball noted another instance in which President Smith’s actions demonstrated his conviction to do good to “one who may have wronged [him]”:

“It was reported to [President Smith] that someone had stolen from his buggy the buggy robe. Instead of being angry, he responded: ‘I wish we knew who it was, so that we could give him the blanket also, for he must have been cold; and some food also, for he must have been hungry.’”³

Another observer wrote of George Albert Smith: “His religion is not doctrine in cold storage. It is not theory. It means more to him than a beautiful plan to be admired. It is more than a philosophy of life. To one of his practical turn of mind, religion is the spirit in which a man lives, in which he does things, if it be only to say a kind word or give a cup of cold water. His religion must find expression in deeds. It must carry over into the details of daily life.”⁴

One of his counselors in the First Presidency, President J. Reuben Clark Jr., summed up President Smith’s personal integrity with these

words: “He was one of those few people of whom you can say he lived as he taught.”⁵

Teachings of George Albert Smith

Our obedience to the gospel—not just our Church membership—qualifies us to be called Saints.

Worship in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a devoted life, a desire to be worthy of him in whose image we have been created and who has given us all . . . that is worth while—the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁶

What a fine thing it is to feel that we belong to a church that is or should be composed of saints. It is not sufficient that we have our names upon the records. It is important that we live the lives that entitle us to be called Saints, and if you will do that, you will be happy. . . .

When Jesus of Nazareth came into the world and began preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, there were many, particularly the self-righteous Pharisees, who rejected His message, claiming that they were the descendants of Abraham and indicated that their lineage would save them in the Kingdom of God.

The Savior informed them that if they were children of Abraham, they would do the works of Abraham. [See John 8:33–39.] I would like to say to the Latter-day Saints, if we are worthy to be called Latter-day Saints, it will be because we are living the lives of saints, and it is the purpose of the Gospel to qualify us in that way. The world has gotten into such a condition and has been deceived by the adversary for such a long time and has declared that the mere belief in God is all that is necessary, that I am fearful for it. That is only a trick of the adversary.⁷ [See suggestion 2 on page 9.]

“Mormonism,” so-called, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, consequently it is the power of God unto salvation to all those who believe and obey its teachings. It is not those who say, “Lord, Lord,” who enjoy the companionship of His spirit but those who do His will [see Luke 6:46].⁸



“Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.”

Referring to the 7th chapter of Matthew and the 24th verse, I find the following:

“Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.

“And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” [Matthew 7:24–27.]

How many of us, learning the will of the Father, are doing it? How many of us day by day are laying a foundation and building a structure that shall conform to the dignity of the stature of our Master? ‘Yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple.’ [D&C 93:35.] He has given us intelligence and wisdom above our fellowmen. A knowledge of pre-existence has been given to the Latter-day Saints; a knowledge that we are here because we kept our first estate, and that we have been given the opportunity of gaining eternal life in the presence of our Heavenly Father, by keeping our second estate. We will not be judged as our brothers and sisters of the world are judged, but according to the greater opportunities placed in our keeping. We will be among those who have received the word of the Lord, who have heard His sayings, and if we do them it will be to us eternal life, but if we fail condemnation will result.⁹

Let us do better than we have ever done before. Let us renew our determination to be real Latter-day Saints, and not just make-believe. . . . I do not know anybody who can not do a little better than he has been doing, if he makes up his mind.¹⁰

**Our Heavenly Father expects us to prepare for
and live worthy of His promised blessings.**

I have opened to the twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew’s account of the Savior’s teaching, and will read this particular parable:

“And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

“And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding. . . .

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

“And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

“Then saith the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“For many are called, but few are chosen.” [See Matthew 22:1–3, 11–14.] . . .

. . . Here was a man who came into the wedding feast, and when the time came the king or the master saw that he didn’t have a wedding garment on. He had ignored the importance of it, apparently. He had come in, not prepared, expecting to participate. He had come to the feast—they had all been bidden to the feast, but I assume that they were supposed to know that only those would be admitted who were properly clothed, and this man was amazed when the question was asked him why he was there in that condition.

The world seems to think that they can come whenever they are ready. Our Father’s children do not understand that there is some preparation to be made. The adversary has so deceived them as to make them believe that no preparation is necessary, anything will do, but in this message that the Savior gave in a parable to his associates we are informed that there must be some preparation, and without that preparation no one will be permitted to partake of the more precious gifts of our Heavenly Father. That applies to the membership of this Church who have an idea that because they have been invited, and because their names appear upon the record among those who have been called, there is nothing more for them to do. . . . They have forgotten the Lord and are not preparing for the feast to which he has invited them.

Our Heavenly Father intends that we shall prepare for the wedding feast or we will be excluded. He expects us to continue to store our minds with the truth, and to disseminate that truth as opportunity offers among all his children. The fact that our names appear upon the Church records is no guarantee that we will find our place in the celestial kingdom. Only those who live worthy to be members of that kingdom shall find place there.

In the midst of the unsettled condition, the uncertainty that is in the world, if there ever was a time when we should examine

ourselves, to find out if we are doing what the Lord would have us do, it is today; if there ever was a time when we should be sure that we are in the pathway of eternal life, it is now. We can't slight these opportunities. God will not be mocked. When he has offered to us a gift, when he has placed within our reach a blessing, when he has invited us to partake of a feast and we ignore it, we may be sure that we shall suffer the distress that will come to those who refuse the blessings of the Lord when they are offered.¹¹

We cannot live like the world and expect to obtain our rightful place in the Kingdom. The Lord tells us in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, referring to evil: that he cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance [see D&C 1:31]. This is hard medicine, because some of us in the Church have the idea that we can trifle with the Gospel of our Lord and with fundamentals of Eternal Life, and yet gain the place we want. This is not true. The Lord will be merciful, but he will be just, and if we want any blessing there is only one way we may obtain it, and that is to keep the commandments that will entitle us to the blessing.¹² [See suggestion 3 on page 9.]

**If we are doing our full duty, our lives give
evidence of our belief in the gospel.**

Within the last year, I have had the privilege of meeting and conversing on the gospel with some men who live in this community [Salt Lake City], not members of our Church. One man had resided here for twenty years, a man whose life is above reproach, a good citizen, a splendid business man, one who has kindly feelings towards our people. He told me that he had lived here twenty years, and he had come to the conclusion that we were just as good as our neighbors who are members of other churches; he could not see any difference in us.

I want to say to you, my brethren and sisters, that is no compliment to me. If the gospel of Jesus Christ does not make me a better man, then I have not developed as I should, and if our neighbors not in this Church can live among us from year to year and see no evidence of the benefits that come from keeping the



“If we are reaching out in all directions to do good to the children of our Father, then we will . . . rejoice in the good that we accomplish here.”

commandments of God in our lives, then there is need for reform in Israel. . . .

. . . Are you doing your duty? are we performing the labor that the Lord has entrusted to our care? do we sense the responsibility that is upon us? or are we idly floating down stream, going with the tide taking it for granted that in the last day, we will be redeemed?¹³

We are called a peculiar people [see 1 Peter 2:9] because, perchance, we thoroughly believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . .

If our peculiarity went to the extent that we lived by every word that proceeds from the mouth of our Heavenly Father [see D&C 84:44], then we would indeed be a blessed people. We do, to a large degree, live by the testimony that has been given to us by our Redeemer, and thus far we are a blessed people; but we would be yet more greatly blessed and prospered if we could bring ourselves to do our full duty.

I pray that the spirit which will enable us to serve faithfully may be with us, that the desire to do good may overcome the temptations that are placed in our way, and that, wherever we go, others observing our good works may be constrained to glorify our Father who is in heaven [see Matthew 5:16].¹⁴

Now let us examine ourselves. Are we doing as much as we should? And if we are not, let us turn around and do better. If we are doing as we should, if we are reaching out in all directions to do good to the children of our Father, then we will bring to ourselves the blessing of an all wise Father, and we will rejoice in the good that we accomplish here. . . .

Let us be humble and prayerful, living near to our Heavenly Father, and evidence our belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ by living up to its principles. Let us evidence our faith in God, and in the work He has given to the earth, by a correct and consistent life, for after all that is the strongest testimony that we will be able to bear of the truth of this work.¹⁵ [See suggestion 4 on page 10.]

Suggestions for Study and Teaching

Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages v–vii.

1. As you review President Smith’s creed (pages 1–2), think of some ideals or principles that you would like to follow in your own life. Consider recording them in a personal journal.
2. Read the last three paragraphs on page 3. What does it mean to be a Latter-day Saint? What can parents do to help their children learn to live the life of a saint?
3. As you read the section that begins on page 5, think about how the parable of the wedding feast might apply to your life (see also Matthew 22:1–14). For example, what do you think the wedding feast represents? Whom do the invited guests represent? Ponder what you can do to “prepare for the wedding feast” (page 6).

4. Read the last paragraph of teachings (on page 9) and think of someone you know who has a strong testimony of the gospel. How does that person's life give evidence of his or her testimony? Consider what you can do to give evidence of your testimony.

Related Scriptures: Matthew 7:16–23; James 1:22–25; 2:15–18; 1 John 2:3–6; Moroni 7:3–5; Doctrine and Covenants 41:5

Teaching help: “To help us teach from the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets, the Church has produced lesson manuals and other materials. There is little need for commentaries or other reference material” (*Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching* [1999], 52).

Notes

1. “President George Albert Smith’s Creed,” *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1950, 262.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 46.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 284.
4. Bryant S. Hinckley, “Greatness in Men: Superintendent George Albert Smith,” *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1932, 270.
5. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Doyle L. Green, “Tributes Paid President George Albert Smith,” *Improvement Era*, June 1951, 405.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1949, 8.
7. “The Church with Divine Authority,” *Deseret News*, Sept. 28, 1946, Church section, 1, 6.
8. In Conference Report, Apr. 1913, 28–29.
9. In Conference Report, Oct. 1906, 47.
10. In Conference Report, Apr. 1941, 27.
11. In Conference Report, Oct. 1930, 66–68.
12. Seventies and stake missionary conference, Oct. 4, 1941, 6.
13. In Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 49.
14. “Some Points of ‘Peculiarity,’” *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1949, 137.
15. In Conference Report, Apr. 1914, 13.