



Temporal Salvation for Ourselves and Others

If we follow the Lord's counsel, we are better able to meet our own temporal needs and help those in need around us.

From the Life of George Albert Smith

George Albert Smith became President of the Church as World War II was ending. The war had left many nations devastated, and thousands of people were without food and other necessities. In a general conference address, President Smith described their plight and urged the Saints to help relieve their suffering: “They are all [God’s] children. They need us; they need not only our moral support and our religious teaching, but they need food and clothing and bedding and help of all kinds because, in many cases, they haven’t anything left. If you could see some of the letters that come into our office from some of the poor people over there, it would wring your hearts. People who have been taken away from their homes with the idea that they were going to be allowed to settle elsewhere, and all of a sudden deserted, and then when they returned to their homes, found them pillaged and robbed of what they had—everything—and left helpless, with no place to go.”¹

Because the Church had been in the practice of storing food for many years, it was prepared to help in these circumstances. Efforts to provide such help began near the end of 1945, when President Smith went to Washington, D.C., to make arrangements with the president of the United States, Harry S Truman, to send food and clothing to Europe. During their meeting President Truman said, “We will be glad to help you in any way we can. . . . How long will it take you to get this ready?”



George Albert Smith visiting a bishops' storehouse with other Church leaders. Because the Church had been storing food, it was prepared to help those in need in the aftermath of World War II.

President Smith surprised him by replying: “It’s all ready. . . . We [have been] building elevators and filling them with grain, and increasing our flocks and our herds, and now what we need is the cars and the ships in order to send considerable food, clothing and bedding to the people of Europe who are in distress. We have an organization in the Church [the Relief Society] that has over two thousand homemade quilts ready.”

President Smith reported to the Saints that as a result of these shipments, “many people received warm clothing and bedding and food without any delay. Just as fast as we could get cars and ships, we had what was necessary to send to Europe.”²

Almost 15 years earlier, Elder Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, addressed the Relief Society during another time of desperate need—the Great Depression. He taught that helping those in need goes beyond providing temporal assistance; it also requires true kindness and charity:

“There never has been a time, in my judgment, when kindness was needed more than now. These are the days when people’s souls are being tried, and when their hearts are being wrung. These are the days when many are facing hunger and distress even among the Latter-day Saints. . . .

“. . . I believe our Heavenly Father is giving us our opportunity for development. . . . We will discover now whether the love the Savior said should be in our hearts is among us.”³ [See suggestion 1 on page 221.]

Teachings of George Albert Smith

If we are wise with our means, we will be prepared for hard times.

It was the advice of [the] early pioneers under President [Brigham] Young to keep a year’s foodstuffs on hand, so that if anybody did lose his crops, he could carry over until the next season. . . .

We may have hard times, brothers and sisters, but we can be prepared for them, if we think of the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine in the days of Pharaoh and plan as they did

[see Genesis 41]. Such conditions may come again. We do not know, but we do know that in the early days of the Church the Presidency and leadership of the Church advised the people to store sufficient food to meet an emergency. The result has been that since the people got thoroughly settled here and farms began producing, and herds and flocks increasing, there has been no real necessity for anybody to suffer for food.⁴

We are living in perilous times. The scriptures are being fulfilled, and as it appears to me this is the particular time when, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived. It is remarkable how easy it is for those who desire to advance their financial interests in the world to find a reason for setting aside the plain teachings of the Lord with reference to our lives. And it is strange to me how many people fall into the habit of listening to those who say things that are contrary to the revealed will of our Heavenly Father. . . .

. . . This people have been advised to conserve their energies and their means. We have been taught by those whom the Lord has raised up to instruct us that we should live within our income, that we should not follow the fashions of the world and expend as rapidly and even more rapidly than we can earn the money that comes into our hands, to take care of ourselves and our families.

I fear that the Latter-day Saints, in many cases, are blinded by their own vanity, by their desire to be what the world is; and we have been told in such plain language by our Heavenly Father that we cannot live as the world lives and enjoy his Spirit.⁵

Some individuals . . . are disposing of their holdings and spending their money for unnecessary things, and if hard times come, they may find themselves unable to meet their obligations.

We might learn a lesson from the ant. He harvests his supplies when they are available and stores them up against the day when it would not be possible to obtain them. The result is that his larder is usually well stocked. The grasshopper, a much larger insect, does not operate that way. He does not lay up anything in store for hard times, but depends upon providence to provide him what he needs, and the result is that most grasshoppers starve to death.



*“We may have hard times, brothers and sisters,
but we can be prepared for them.”*

I fear that some human beings are like the grasshopper and do not take advantage of the opportunities that are theirs in a reasonable way. If they would take a lesson from the ant, they would lay up the food that they need and always have some on hand.⁶ [See suggestion 2 on page 221.]

**The Lord has directed us to work
to earn our own livelihood.**

The very fact that so much money has been made available to many people gives the youth in some instances the feeling that because money comes relatively easy, honest toil is not necessary or desirable. And yet I am satisfied that no people have ever lived upon the earth who, having failed to earn their livelihood by integrity and industry, have not gone to decay.

If our children grow up in idleness, we know that this is displeasing to the Lord.⁷

How much better off we are when we are occupied with some reasonable work.⁸

Our Heavenly Father . . . said long, long ago there were idlers in Zion, . . . and he said, "He that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer." [D&C 42:42.] I am assuming that he did not mean those who cannot find employment, and who are legitimately trying to take care of themselves. I am assuming that he referred to the habit some people get into of leaning upon their neighbor. . . . I feel that there has been no justification given to any man in this world to feel that he can depend on somebody else to provide him a livelihood. I did not feel when I was a child that somebody would be compelled to provide me a means of living. The Lord gave me intelligence. He directed that I should work, and I began to work when I was twelve years of age, and I found joy in it, and have earned my living and helped others during more than fifty years.

I thank God for work, for the joy that comes from doing things in the world. I am not indicating any particular kind of employment except that it be honorable. But the Lord has indicated that we should be industrious. In ancient times he said that we should earn our living by the sweat of our face [see Genesis 3:19].⁹ [See suggestion 3 on page 221.]

**Neither the rich nor the poor should set
their hearts upon riches.**

"Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls; and this shall be your lamentation in the day of visitation, and of judgment, and of indignation: The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!" (D&C 56:16.)

That is what the Lord says of the rich people who refuse to impart of their substance to those who are poor. But he says something just as serious to the poor man who is not doing his best. He says:

“Wo unto you poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men’s goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, and who will not labor with your own hands!” (D&C 56:17.) . . .

. . . Then he said further, “But blessed are the poor who are pure in heart.” There is quite a difference there, “. . . blessed are the poor who are pure in heart, whose hearts are broken, and whose spirits are contrite, for they shall see the kingdom of God coming in power and great glory unto their deliverance; for the fatness of the earth shall be theirs.” (D&C 56:18.)

They are those who have not the wealth of the world but still have life and being and intelligence, and who are anxious to do the thing the Lord would have them do. . . .

Now, my brethren and sisters, we have both rich and poor in our organizations. If we are poor, we can be worthy just as the Lord indicates here. We can be pure in heart and do our best, and he will not permit those who do their best to suffer for the necessities of life among the people who are in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . .

I hope we are not going to become bitter because some men and women are well-to-do. If we are well-to-do, I hope we are not going to be self-centered and unconscious of the needs of our Father’s other children. If we are better off than they are, we ought to be real brothers and sisters, not make-believe. Our desires should be to develop in this world such an organization that others, seeing our good works would be constrained to glorify the name of our Heavenly Father. . . .

We must not fall into the bad habits of other people. We must not get into the frame of mind that we will take what the other man has. Refer back to the ten commandments, and you will find one short paragraph, “Thou shalt not covet.” [Exodus 20:17.] . . .

We must not get into that frame of mind. Others may do that, but if we have the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our hearts, we will not be deceived in that regard.

We are told that we cannot serve God and some other master [see Matthew 6:24]. We have to make our choice, and if we want to be the servants of God and the children of our Heavenly Father and earn his blessings, we must do it by honoring him and by keeping his commandments. Our feelings, and our love, if I may use that expression, should go out to all the world as far as they will receive it.¹⁰ [See suggestion 4 on page 222.]

Through tithing and other offerings, we assist in the work of the Church and bless those in need.

The Lord has given us the privilege of contributing one-tenth of our interest, for His Church, for the development of His work in the world. Those who pay their tithing receive their blessing. . . . We cannot expect to earn blessings without earnest effort. We will be required to make what appears to some to be sacrifices. I suppose people think when they pay their tithing that they are making a sacrifice, but they are not; they are making a real investment that will return an eternal dividend. Our Heavenly Father gives us all that we have. He places all in our hands, authorizing us to retain for our own use nine-tenths of it, and then He asks that we put His tenth where He directs, where He knows it will accomplish the most good in developing His Church.

When we heard the reports this morning of this great Church [during a session of general conference], the financial report impressed me much—to know that a great organization like this, with its multitudes of people, functioning in so many ways, in the midst of the world's turmoil and distress is in such a condition that one of the Presidency of the Church could stand here and truthfully say to us this Church is out of debt. With the nations and most of the people in debt, yet the Church has been so managed that it is out of debt. Let us think about it. Let us sustain the Church. Let us follow the active leadership of the Church. Let us so live that the Lord can bless us as He blesses the Church.¹¹

If you have paid an honest tithing, I may say without hesitation the other nine-tenths has been a greater blessing to those who have



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paid than the one hundred percent has been to those who have not. It is the Lord’s work. . . . Men could not have done this. With all your generosity and all your giving, all your missionary work, with your care of the poor, . . . with all that you have been giving as ordinary people, I testify that what you have left brings to you more happiness, more peace, more comfort and more assurance of eternal life than any other people in the world enjoy today.¹²

I am sure the Lord loves those humble, faithful souls who are willing to reach out and touch those who are in need whether it be with food or clothing or bedding or kindness because that is a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.¹³ [See suggestion 5 on page 222.]

**If we are generous with our means, there is
no need for anyone to go without.**

There is no necessity for any man, woman, or child in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to go without, for the Church is organized to help those who lack the necessities of life. There is plenty for all, and to spare. . . . God has permitted men to get wealth, and if they obtained it properly, it is theirs, and he will bless them in its use if they will use it properly.¹⁴

We are becoming so wrapped up with the world that we forget the people who are suffering that we could help, in many cases.¹⁵

Think of the men that have been out of employment and the women also. . . . Think of the number of our Father's children that he loves just as much as he loves us who will be in distress. Think of what the suffering will be if we who are more fortunate are not generous with the substance God has placed in our hands—not only the substance, but if we withhold from his children the word of encouragement and helpfulness and fail to visit in the homes where there are so many in need and give what it is possible for each one of us to give. Brethren and sisters, all these opportunities are given to us to enrich ourselves and develop our characters and that we may lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal [see Matthew 6:20]. These opportunities are offered to us by an all-wise Father who knowing the end from the beginning has said: "This is the path, walk you in it."

Let us . . . look around us in our neighborhood—not leave it to the Bishop and the Relief Society, but let each of us be ministers of loving kindness to those who will need us so much. And whatever we do let us not make those who require assistance feel like paupers. Let us give what we give as though it belonged to them. God has loaned it to us. Sometimes we who have accumulated means [act] as though we think it belongs to us. Everything that we have, our food, our clothing, our shelter, our homes and our opportunities are all given to us as stewards in the Church and kingdom of our Heavenly Father, and if we will . . . impart of our substance even

though it may be but the widow's mite, we will obtain from him who lives on high the blessings we need in our day here upon the earth, and when the time comes for us to go hence we will find awaiting us the blessing of a loving Father who has appreciated the efforts we have put forth.¹⁶

If we desire to be identified with the kingdom of our Lord, the celestial kingdom, this is our opportunity to prepare,—with love unfeigned, with industry, with thrift, with perseverance, with a desire to do all that is within our power to bless others, to give—not to be always feeling we must receive, but desire to give, for I say to you: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” [Acts 20:35.] The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of giving, not only of our substance but of ourselves, and I thank my Heavenly Father that I belong to such an organization that has been so instructed.¹⁷ [See suggestion 6 on page 222.]

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. George Albert Smith told the Saints during the Great Depression, “I believe our Heavenly Father is giving us our opportunity for development” (page 213). What does this mean to you? In what ways do we “develop” as we serve those in need?
2. As you read the first section of teachings (pages 213–15), consider things you can do to begin or improve your storage of food and resources. What are some examples of emergencies or conditions for which you should prepare? What can priesthood quorums and Relief Societies do to help members prepare for these emergencies?
3. Review the section that begins on page 215 and read Doctrine and Covenants 68:31. Why do you think the Lord requires us to work for our livelihood? What are some effective ways to teach children the importance of work?

4. Read President Smith’s warnings to the rich and the poor on pages 216–18. What are the consequences of setting our hearts upon riches? What can we do to avoid this?
5. Read the section that begins on page 218, in which President Smith discusses the blessings of paying tithing and other offerings. What are some effective ways to teach young people or new members about these blessings?
6. As you study the last section of teachings (pages 220–21), think of something specific you can do to help the bishop and other ward leaders meet the needs of people in your ward or community. What does it mean to you to give “not only of our substance but of ourselves”?

Related Scriptures: Ephesians 4:28; James 1:27; 2 Nephi 5:17; Jacob 2:17–19; Mosiah 4:22–25; Doctrine and Covenants 104:13–18

Teaching help: “Even when you teach many people at the same time, you can reach out to individuals. For example, you reach out to individuals when you greet each person warmly at the beginning of class. . . . You also reach out when you make participation inviting and safe” (*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 35).

Notes

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| 1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 181. | 9. In Conference Report, Oct. 1934, 49–50. |
| 2. In Conference Report, Oct. 1947, 6. | 10. In Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 170–72. |
| 3. “To the Relief Society,” <i>Relief Society Magazine</i> , Dec. 1932, 706. | 11. In Conference Report, Apr. 1941, 25, 28. |
| 4. In Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 162, 165. | 12. In Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 16–17. |
| 5. In Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 30. | 13. In Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 162. |
| 6. In <i>Improvement Era</i> , Aug. 1946, 521. | 14. In Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 169, 171. |
| 7. “Some Warning Signs,” <i>Improvement Era</i> , July 1948, 425. | 15. In Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 181. |
| 8. In Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 171. | 16. “Saints Blessed,” <i>Deseret News</i> , Nov. 12, 1932, Church section, 8. |
| | 17. In Conference Report, Oct. 1934, 52. |