



After the Manner of



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Of the Seventy

Great solace and satisfaction should come to us in knowing that our happiness and progress are basic to our Father's purposes.

As Latter-day Saints, we have been blessed with revelations that greatly expand our understanding of pre-mortal life, our purpose in mortality, and our future opportunities and destiny. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The great Jehovah contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth, pertaining to the plan of salvation, before it rolled into existence . . . ; the past, the present, and the future were and are, with Him, one eternal ‘now.’”¹

Knowing that the plan of happiness was based on His knowledge of all things, we realize that the closer we come to living in accordance with the patterns and principles He has set, the happier and more complete we will be.

The Commandments— a Treasure and Blessing

The prophets and the Holy Ghost will always invite us to keep the commandments of God, leading us to enjoy a life of righteousness. The commandments, which glorify us in truth and knowledge (see D&C 93:28), should never be regarded as bothersome or annoying but rather as great assets in our personal preparation for eternal

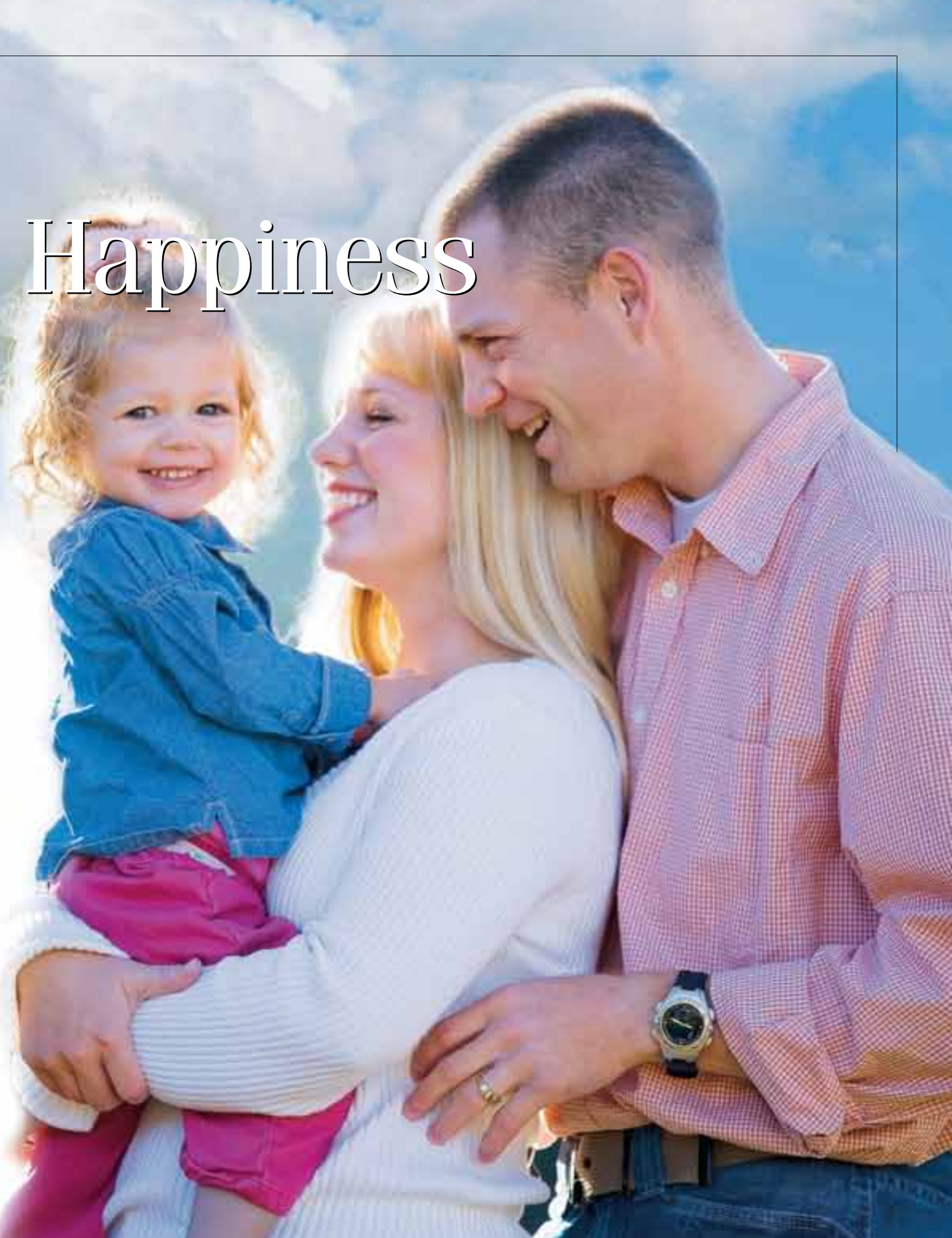
happiness and success. King Benjamin taught that “never-ending happiness” comes from keeping the commandments of God (Mosiah 2:41), while Alma taught that “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10).

Great solace and satisfaction should come to us in knowing that our happiness and progress are basic to our Father’s purposes. Moses 1:39 teaches us that His greatest interest is our attainment of complete happiness in accord with the plan He has established: “For behold, this is my work and my glory— to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”

The first principle in this scripture deals with the eternal nature of our lives and our resurrection because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We cannot receive a fulness of joy while the body and the spirit are separate (see D&C 93:33–34). The second principle, also a blessing of the Atonement, deals with the fulness we may obtain by living the Lord’s commandments, being obedient to an inspired pattern of living, and returning to God’s presence:

“And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments.

“He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in



Happiness

Happiness came to the Nephites as they worked hard to sustain themselves, learned from the holy scriptures, reared their families, and built a temple to the Lord.



THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, BY C. A. CHRISTENSEN, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

truth and knoweth all things” (D&C 93:27–28).

God’s desire to help us receive these abundant blessings and to share all that He has with His righteous children (see D&C 84:38) is quite different from the desire of the adversary, who would tempt us, overpower us, and reward us with “no good thing” (Alma 34:39).

The Commandments and Our Children

We might ask, “What of our children who are being raised in a world that lacks a moral conscience and that is not anchored in true and righteous principles?” Alma mentions an important sequence that can help us with the rising generation: “God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption” (Alma 12:32). First came the grandeur of the plan, and then came the commandments that opened the door to its enjoyment.

If we understand this sequence, we will make sure that our children know that they are children of God. As they grow up knowing of premortal life, the purpose of earth life, and the need for the Savior and His

Atonement—and having a glimpse of what they can enjoy eternally—the commandments will naturally make sense to them. If we fail to teach our children who they are, both by example and by exposure to truth and light (see D&C 93:40), we should not be surprised by their lack of obedience. The closer our children come to understanding the things of God, the happier and more complete they will be. Parents cannot pass this responsibility on to any other person or organization.

After the Manner of Happiness

After a period of separation from Laman and Lemuel, the Nephites “lived after the manner of happiness” (2 Nephi 5:27). This resulted from their faith in Jesus Christ, even 600 years before His mortal ministry. They happily followed the prophets of their day and understood the plan of salvation. Happiness came as they worked hard to sustain themselves, learned from the holy scriptures, reared their families, and built a temple to the Lord (see 2 Nephi 5:11–13, 16).

Keeping the commandments was an essential condition to their happy way of life: “And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things” (2 Nephi 5:10). They were not selective in the commandments they kept, but “in all things” they sought to be obedient. They knew that their temporal well-being, as well as their spiritual growth, depended upon their keeping the commandments of God.

When We Make Mistakes

While learning these lessons, the Nephites, like us, were not perfect people. Even Nephi, one of the greatest prophets of

all time, exclaimed: “O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities” (2 Nephi 4:17). Undoubtedly his sins were not grievous, but it is clear that he was not satisfied with himself. Later verses indicate that, rather than despair and succumb to his imperfections, Nephi simply remembered who he was and that the Lord had consistently guided him. He then invoked the powers of heaven to redeem his soul, deliver him out of the hands of his enemies, help him shake at the very appearance of sin, shut the gates of hell before him, help him be strict with himself, and encircle him about in the Lord’s robe of righteousness (see 2 Nephi 4:31–34).

Peter, who denied that he knew the Savior; Paul, who persecuted the Saints; and Alma the Younger, who, with the sons of Mosiah, tried to destroy the Church—all likewise forsook their sins and followed the Master for the rest of their lives. What greater examples could we have of overcoming mistakes?

Trappings of the Modern World

In our age many people find themselves caught up in the enticements of modern culture. In the beginning these enticements may seem inconsequential or harmless, but failure to abandon them may lead to addictive behavior that offends the Spirit, leaving God’s children spiritually paralyzed and lacking confidence (see D&C 121:45). The following points may help us avoid inappropriate behavior that causes personal embarrassment, anguish of soul, and unhappiness.

1. Have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a desire to enjoy the blessings of celestial life. Moroni exhorted us to “come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing” (Moroni 10:30). The scriptures teach that “he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory” (D&C 88:22). By disciplining ourselves in righteous living, we become the people the Lord wants us to be.

Alma the Younger, with the sons of Mosiah, tried to destroy the Church, but after being rebuked by an angel, all forsook their sins and followed the Master.



ALMA ARISE BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

2. Recognize mistakes and correct them through repentance. The words of Amulek to the poor Zoramites are a good reminder that “this life is the time for [us] to prepare

to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors. . . .

“I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance . . . ; behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed” (Alma 34:32–33). Simply feeling remorseful is not repentance. True repentance leads to a new and righteous pattern of life.

3. Know that the Lord invites us to enjoy eternal happiness but will never force us. Alma’s words to his son Corianton remind us that the choice to repent is ours:



King Benjamin taught that “never-ending happiness” comes from keeping the commandments of God.

“Therefore, O my son, whosoever will come may come and partake of the waters of life freely; and whosoever will not come the same is not compelled to come; but in the last day it shall be restored unto him according to his deeds” (Alma 42:27).

4. Believe that the Savior can truly help us be clean and happy. In Gethsemane, Jesus took upon himself not only the sins of the world but also the pain, afflictions, temptations, sorrow, and sadness of all God’s children. Jesus felt everything as we feel it in the flesh, including the temptations we endure (see Alma 7:11–12). As we confess and forsake our sins, He can, through the power of the Atonement, help us and heal us. These changes in our lives lift us to newfound joy and profound happiness.

5. Have faith that forgiveness comes to those who truly repent. “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:42–43).

Through total repentance, the victory each person wins in his own heart will determine his present and eternal happiness. With determination, we might say to ourselves, “I may not be perfect in all things at this time, but in this one area that has caused me such heartache and pain, I will be perfect.”

Let us remember that we are sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father who knows us and seeks our exaltation and eternal happiness. A plan of happiness has been prepared for that purpose. It includes

commandments that are helpful stepping-stones in our progress as we overcome the world and become more like our Father.

Those who have gone before have shown us how to forsake our sins and endure to the end. Each of us deals with challenges in this life that we must overcome. Great joy and happiness will come as we are successful in this process. With faith in Jesus Christ and a determination to do our best to follow Him, we can overcome all things and eventually enjoy eternal, never-ending happiness. By so doing, we may exclaim with Nephi that we also have “lived after the manner of happiness.” ■

NOTE

1. *History of the Church*, 4:597.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Summarize the five suggestions in the section “Trappings of the Modern World.” Select an area of behavior where the family needs to improve. As an activity, sit in a circle and take turns tossing a ball to one another. Each time a person catches the ball, have that family member share an idea on how to improve in this area. Make a goal to use these ideas during the coming week. Conclude with the last paragraph of the article. Testify that obedience to the commandments brings happiness.

2. Read the last two paragraphs of the article. Prepare pieces of paper to be used as “stepping-stones” labeled with commandments. Have family members take turns stepping from one stone to the next as they explain how each commandment helps them to “overcome the world and become more like our Father.” Consider having a “treasure” at the end of the path.